

**BOARD OF REGENTS FOR ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION
MINUTES OF MEETING
September 25, 2003**

A meeting of the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education was held at the Shepard Building - 255 Westminister Street, Providence, RI 02903 and convened at 5:05 p.m.

In Attendance:

J. DiPrete, C. Callahan, S. Duff, P. Guida, G. Grove, and M. Mancieri.

Public Remarks

There were no public remarks.

Chairman's Remarks

There were no chairman remarks.

Approval of Minutes

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The minutes of the Board of Regents Meetings of August 14, 2003, September 11, 2003 and Executive Minutes of September 11, 2003 be approved as presented.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Approval of Responses to Reports of the Auditor General for Fiscal Year End June 30, 2002

Director of Finance, Carolyn Dias, reviewed each of the four findings, as attached.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, The Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Accept the Responses to the Reports of the Auditor General for the Child Nutrition Program; Class Size Reduction Program:

**Maintenance of Effort; Special Education, Title I, and Class Size
Reduction
Program: Cash Management, as Presented.**

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Board of Regents Minutes
September 25, 2003
Page 2 of 4

FY '05 Budget Transmittal

The Chairman of the Regents' Finance Committee, Mario Mancieri told the Regents that the Director of Finance, Carolyn Dias had met with the members of the Regents Finance Committee before this meeting and based on her recommendation, the committee is recommending that the Regents adhere to the Governor's 10% budget reduction request. However, the committee is strongly recommending that the board voice their concerns to the Governor about the impact that the cuts will have on current education initiatives and programs.

David Abbott, the Assistant Commissioner explained to the members of the board that the context for transmitting the budget is different this year. In the mist of the current fiscal fitness environment, all state agencies have been asked to transmit a budget that would comply with a 10% reduction in operations.

The Director of Finance, Carolyn Dias reviewed the budget, highlighting the proposed cuts. She reviewed the “funding sources” \$799 million from general revenue (state), \$185.4 million federal & restricted receipts, and \$1.4 million capital funds for a total of \$985.9 million for FY 2005. She then reviewed the eight budget lines – Admin of the Comprehensive Ed. Strategy, School Aid, School Housing Aid, Davies Career & Tech., RI School for the Deaf, the Met Career & Tech School, Central Falls, and Teachers’ Retirement – and reviewed the changes to each as follows:

- **Comprehensive Ed. Strategy** – decrease of \$1,158,090 or 7.1% which represents a current services budget with unfunded priorities, including 25% reduction to legislative grants, elimination of the Amer-I-Can grant, restructuring of the Health Assessment Program, drivers’ ed. program to transfer to CCRI, return Voc/tech. schools back to their respective community, total general revenue and RICAP savings \$1,498,039 or 10%.
- **School Aid** – increase of \$5,838,098 or 0.9%
- **School Housing aid & Teacher Retirement** – budget office target adds \$4.0 million (9.8%) increase to FY 04 enacted housing aid and a \$2.6 million (6.27%) increase to the estimated final FY 04 housing aid; and increase \$6,265,276 (13.8%) to teachers retirements as per state budget office instructions
- **Davies Career & Tech. School** – an increase of \$381,220 or 3.4%
- **R.I. School for the Deaf** - increase of \$227,427 or 4%
- **Met Career & Tech** – increase of \$2,89,970 or 36.3%
- **Central Falls** – increase of \$3,417,759 or 9.5%.

Ms. Dias and Mr. Abbott requested that the board vote to authorize the transmittal of the budget to the Governor, as presented, so that the department can meet the October 6 deadline.

Chairman DiPrete advised the Regents that he would like to approve the transmittal of the budget as presented, but to request that the Governor meet with the Regents to discuss the impact of the cuts on education. Regent Callahan expressed her concern that the proposed budget is “sending mixed messages” because of the relatively large increases being proposed for the state’s charter schools, but level funding to the local schools/districts. She also requested that the transmittal letter capture the dilemma of the capacity of the department to take on additional work in light of the requirements of No Child Left Behind and the passage this year of the High School regulations. There was extensive discussion among members of the Board on the impact that the cuts would have on such projects as the student identifier/ comprehensive information, the professional development requirement of the high school regs., among others. The Regents requested that the 9.5% increase for Central Falls be re-reviewed by the department’s finance office. Members felt that the 9.5% increase could not be justified in light of other education cuts. Assistant Commissioner David Abbott spoke to members about advocating for strategic investments in such areas as:

- Aid to support district infrastructure for the comprehensive education information system;
- Funding to support reading and mathematics instruction that complements Title I funding and is targeted to the appropriate students and schools;
- Money for professional development to align classroom instruction with best teaching practices, especially in reading and math;
- Funding to expand instructional time beyond the current school day and year, both in traditional programming and in after school programs; and
- Funding to expand teacher and staff time within the school day and year to coordinate the delivery of services based on student need and to improve instruction.

Mr. Abbott also spoke to the members about the capacity of the department and how the 10% cuts would impact department/Regents initiatives. Regents strongly expressed their opposition to this budget. They requested that the budget transmittal letter state in strong language their opposition.

It was agreed that department staff would draft a transmittal letter for initial review by the Commissioner and Chairman which would then be faxed to all Regents for input.

MOVED AND SECONDED: THAT, the Board of Regents for Elementary and Secondary Education Transmit FY '05 Budget Recommendations to the Governor, as per the Recommendation of the Regents Finance Committee; but that the request would be accompanied by a transmittal letter to the Governor stating the Board's objections to the cuts and asking for a meeting to discuss the cuts.

VOTE: Approved Unanimously.

Update on School Classification Notifications

Going Well - will meet the October 9 release date.

The Commissioner will make the announcement at a press conference that will be held at a school that has met their targets. The Regents will be notified.

Implementing the Progressive Support and Intervention Initiative

Assistant Commissioner, David Abbott referred to enclosure #7 in the Regents package - "Implementing the Progressive Support and Intervention Initiative". He briefly reviewed the contents of the package and told Regents that they would have additional time to discuss PSI at the next meeting of the Board.

Executive Session

There was no Executive Session.

Adjournment

With unanimous consent the meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.